

Awakening the “sleeping beauty” of Japanese tableware: the roles of linguistic fetish and iconicity

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This study demonstrates how a little known brand of traditional Japanese pottery, Hasami ware, has revitalised itself through visual representation in names, logos, and product designs. This successful case of brand revitalisation can be a model for the Japanese traditional craft industry, which has been struggling to enliven its business for a long time. In analysing brand names, the idea of “linguistic fetish” (Kelly-Holmes 2005; 2014), “the phenomenon of using languages for symbolic (fetishised) rather than utility (instrumental-communicative) purposes in commercial texts” (Kelly-Holmes 2014, 135), is adopted. In addition, the effects of the iconic resemblance between logotypes and products are also analysed. Finally, the newly revitalised brand image of Hasami ware is discussed.

1 Introduction

This study examines a successful case of brand revitalisation in a little known brand of traditional Japanese pottery, Hasami ware. Brand revitalisation is a marketing strategy used to inject new energy into an existing brand, which has become tired and needs refreshment (Doyle 2016). Hedging et al. (2010, 14) point out the reason for such tiredness as “ageing or decline in brand relevance.” This may be due to a variety of reasons, such as not adapting to the changes in the environment or consumer preferences, and “the ageing of its core consumers” (ibid., 14). The traditional Japanese craft industry has faced this problem for a long time. After their peak in 1983, with the total sales of approximately 540 billion yen, they started declining after 1990. The total sales recorded in 2017 was 92.7 billion yen, implying that it had lost almost 80% of its profits since 1983 (Inoue 2020, 1). One of the reasons behind this decline is attributed to outdated product designs that no longer appeal to Japanese consumers as their lifestyle and dietary habits have become westernised (Inoue 2020; Yonemitsu 2006). Kimura (2017, 42-43) points out that although the traditional craft industry must innovate and create new products to satisfy various consumer demands and develop new outlets and markets, most of the companies are incapable of doing so because they are mostly small and medium-

sized enterprises subcontracted to larger manufacturing companies; they lack in the requisite knowledge regarding product distribution, branding, and outsourcing product design. Hasami ware, which is the focus of this study, is not an exception. After achieving its peak in 1981, its sales declined when the pottery industry suffered due to the deflationary economy after Japan's asset-inflated bubble burst in 1990 and a global financial services firm called the Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc. went bankrupt in 2008 (Yamamoto 2016, 181). Therefore, it was necessary for Hasami ware to be revitalised in order to re-attract the existing and new customers and to open new markets domestically and globally.

To observe the revitalisation of Hasami ware, this study focuses on the newly launched brands of a local leading firm of Japan, Saikai Pottery, Co., Ltd. (henceforth, Saikai). This company was first established as a local wholesaler in 1946 but has now expanded its business to international trading and manufacturing. The CEO, Morisuke Kodama, is also the president of the Association for the Promotion of Hasami ware. Currently, Saikai has inaugurated four new brands that it advertises and sells on bilingual websites in English and Japanese. Interestingly, none of the four new brands were designed to create traditional Japanese pottery for Japanese cuisine but were neutralised to fit Western cuisine. To accomplish this, Saikai collaborated with three Japanese designers and one Finnish designer. All the designers, except for a Japanese designer, are based either in the US or Europe. The names of the brands are all in foreign languages: "Common" and "Hasami Porcelain" in English, "Sabato" (meaning "Saturday") in Italian, and "Nuppu" (meaning "bud") in Finnish. Such preferences for neutral designs and foreign language names contrast with the global marketing strategy of Japanese whiskey brands (Shibata 2020), which focus on Japanese names and traditional designs.

This study analyses the names, logos, and designs of the four aforementioned brands to discuss how Hasami ware has revitalised its image and products. As Murphy stated (1992, 86), appealing names are crucial for creating successful brands because they are valuable assets: (1) they create an identity which consumers can "specify, reject, or recommend"; (2) they enable "overt" or "subconscious" communication; and (3) they become a "particular piece of legal property" that protects them from "competitive attack and trespass". In order to analyse the newly launched brand names, the idea of "linguistic fetish," "the phenomenon of using languages for symbolic (fetishised) rather than utility (instrumental-communicative) purposes in commercial texts" (Kelly-Holmes 2014, 135) is adopted to observe the effects of foreign languages. It is based on Marx's idea of fetishisation "the capacity of creating [symbolic] value – a value greater than it contains" (Marx and Engels 1959 [1894], 392, cited in Kelly-Holmes 2005, 23). In the case of "Common," for example, the name was selected not only for the phonetic and semantic effects of the word "common," but also for its symbolic value in English as a lingua franca.

Following the analysis of brand names, the visual effects of the logos and product

designs in branding are analysed. Analysing a brand logo is crucial because it diagrammatises a brand name in a graphic way as “the most salient visual element of a brand, facilitating brand identification (Janiszewski and Meyvis 2001) and differentiation, and serving as the primary visual representation of a brand’s image and meaning (Henderson and Cote 1998; Maclinnis et al. 1999)” (cited in Baxter and Ilicic 2018, 509). The design and redesign of a brand logo are frequently used to revitalise and maintain a brand (Müller et al. 2013). This study focuses on their iconic operations in the visual representations of brands, as they relate to product designs and photographs on websites and brochures. Here, the “defining feature of iconicity is merely *perceived resemblance*” (Chandler 2007, 40, italicized original). Therefore, in this study, “icons” represent the “signs that are similar in some respects to their represented objects” (Clarke 1990, 63), including images, “those which partake of simple qualities” such as portraits, diagrams, “those which represent the relations, mainly dyadic, or so regarded, of the parts of one thing by analogous relations in their own parts” such as maps, and metaphors, “those which represent the representative character of a representamen by representing a parallelism in something else” (Peirce 1934-1936, 2.277), such as “Snow White”, explaining the colour of the skin by snow.

Consider the following illustration of the analysis of the name and logo of Saikai, the company of the four brands, which generates the data of this study. The name “Saikai” is derived from the name of a local bridge built near the company site, called *Saikai-bashi* (“*bashi*” means “a bridge” in Japanese). Associating the company with the bridge aims to connect their products with the customers to “enrich their lifestyles” as stated in the brochure. Furthermore, the pronunciation of /saikai/ written in the Roman alphabet can also mean “meet again (再会),” which corresponds with the image of connection, thereby intensifying the analogy of a bridge. The logos of Saikai and Tokyo Saikai (Figures 1 and 2) containing Japanese and the Roman alphabet have been redesigned to emanate an iconic effect, by shaping the letterforms and Chinese characters to resemble cups and rice bowls, following an interview with Morisuke Kodama, the CEO of Saikai. The forms of the letters “S,” “O,” and “C” as well as the squares in the characters “東,” “京,” “西,” and “海” represent a rice bowl by making the horizontal line on the top longer than the one at the bottom. This iconic resemblance graphically signifies that the company produces and distributes tableware. By writing in the Roman alphabet, the company successfully manages to convey an image that it is a global firm.

Figure 1 Logo of Saikai Pottery Co., Ltd.



Figure 2 Logo of Tokyo Saikai Co., Ltd.



2 Hasami ware

2.1 *A traditional craft*

Hasami ware, including ceramics and porcelain, is a traditional craft made in the town of Hasami in Nagasaki prefecture, Japan. It has a history of over 400 years. The Korean artisans introduced the skills of porcelain production to Japan after Hideyoshi Toyotomi dispatched his troops to Korea (Yamamoto 2016, 180). During the 17th century—the transition period from the Ming (1368-1644) to the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912) in China—Hasami ware was exported to Southeast Asia and Europe. After the Qing Dynasty established stability in the nation and resumed the worldwide export of its porcelains, Hasami turned its focus towards the domestic market. Until the middle of the 19th century, large numbers of cheap but high-quality porcelain were produced and distributed all over Japan (Nakano 2016). Witnessing many historical events, including two World Wars and a rapid economic growth (Yamamoto 2016, 180), Hasami ware has established a production and distribution system to stabilise the business.

In 1978, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry designated Hasami ware as an official traditional craft brand (henceforth, the Ministry of Economy). As of 2018, 230 traditional crafts were officially designated by the Ministry of Economy (<http://www.densan-world.jp/japan-traditional-crafts.html> Accessed on 1, 8, 2020). Official traditional crafts are certified with labels to differentiate them from similar products. Furthermore, the Ministry of Economy and its affiliated association, the Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industry, support their business in various ways. For example, the Ministry of Economy provides subsidies for promotion, apprenticeship, and product development (Kimura 2017, 43). The Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industry “actively promotes Japanese handicrafts on a global scale and contributes to their market expansion” (<http://www.densan-world.jp/about.html> Accessed on 1, 8, 2020) by organising various events and participating in trade shows in Europe to promote Japanese traditional crafts (Inoue 2020; Maruyama 2017, 92).

Despite such financial and communication support measures, Japanese traditional crafts including Hasami ware struggle to survive. Since its peak in 1983, the total sales of the industry have declined drastically (Inoue 2020; Yonemitsu 2006). There are several reasons for this. First, technological development facilitating mass production allowed consumers to purchase high-quality, beautifully designed, and functional products at a low price, whereas traditional crafts were mostly expensive and outdated in terms of design and did not take consumers’ needs into account (Yonemitsu 2006, 54). Imported products also caused serious negative impacts on the market for traditional Japanese crafts. Imports from Asian countries intensified price competition, whereas products from Europe appealed more to Japanese consumers with a westernised lifestyle. Even though Hasami ware maintained lower prices as compared to other traditional crafts, the prices

offered by tableware imports from Asia were unbeatable. In addition, European porcelains such as Wedgwood from the UK and Royal Copenhagen from Denmark strongly attracted Japanese consumers because of their sophisticated designs. Second, the traditional craft industry was unable to build a new system of product distribution after the roles and functions of wholesalers were weakened (Kimura 2017; Machida 2003; Yonemitsu 2006) because of the development of low-cost and rapid distribution systems along with extensive information networks. Costs could not be reduced because of the drawbacks in the system of product distribution (Yonemitsu 2006, 54). Hasami ware was no exception. The establishment of a new distribution line was delayed because of outdated beliefs that traditional tableware should be displayed at famous department stores, where potential customers rarely purchase tableware anymore. Third, most traditional Japanese crafts lack visibility. Consumers were not well informed about the characteristics and strengths of the products (ibid., 54). The visibility of Hasami ware was also very low because its manufacture and distribution were associated with places such as Imari in the Edo period (1603-1867) and Arita after the Meiji era (1868-1912) (Tanizawa 2016, 132). Although many Japanese consumers had previously purchased and used Hasami ware, they thought of them as either Imari or Arita ware. After 2002, however, the use of a geographical indication became strictly controlled in the industry of porcelain tableware (Ichise 2018, 4), and Arita ware prohibited Hasami and other wares to sell their products as “Arita ware.” Since then, Hasami ware has been unable to use Arita’s name for their sales (The Association for the Promotion of Hasami Ware 2018). The inability to use the term “Arita ware” greatly affected the visibility of Hasami ware.

2.2 Revitalisation and stabilisation of Hasami ware as a new brand

After becoming independent of Arita ware in 2002, Hasami ware faced the issue of the ageing of the product designs and system of product distribution as well as a lack of visibility. To solve the first and second problem respectively, it had to simultaneously revitalise its business and establish itself as a new brand. As Heding et al. (2010, 14) state, in brand revitalisation, it is necessary to firstly identify the current conditions and then set up the target vision to re-attract the existing and new consumers. Dion and Mazzalovo (2016) identify four reactivation issues: (1) “the brand’s orientation toward the past,” (2) “the level of brand awareness before the revival,” (3) “reinterpretation of the brand’s features,” and (4) “brand authentication” (p. 5896). Each of these issues can be observed in the case of revitalized Hasami ware as a popular tableware brand.

Regarding the first problem, Hasami ware was not firmly established as a brand, even though it was designated as one of the official traditional crafts in 1978. A brand is not only “the actual product,” but also “the unique property of a specific owner,” which “has been developed over time so as to embrace a set of values and attributes (both tangible and intangible) which meaningfully and appropriately differentiate products which are

otherwise very similar” (Murphy 1990, 2). Accordingly, a brand will possess (1) “history,” (2) “relationships,” (3) “memory,” and (4) “identity” (Lash and Lury 2007, 6) as a mark of its distinction from similar brands and products. In other words, brands are valuable when they are distinct whilst products are valuable when they resemble each other. The singularity of a brand is “not concrete, but an abstract”; the relationships between people and a brand are a “part of its value” (ibid., 6). Thus, a brand is powerful due to its abstract singularity in its relationship with consumers. Hasami ware was not yet established as a brand but was labelled as “Imari” or “Arita ware.” Therefore, competitive prices and designs had to be prioritized.

The second problem is closely related to the first one. Owing to Hasami ware’s lack of visibility as a brand, consumers did not have any memories or relationships associated with it. Producers did not have to consider the brand identity or worry about its visibility until it became independent of Arita ware in 2002. However, they had to take account of the features of Hasami ware that were useful to establish it as a singular brand, distinctive from other traditional chinaware products.

Hasami ware was in effect a “dormant brand like sleeping beauty” (Dion and Mazzalovo 2016, 5894). It had the potential to become a successful brand because of its longevity and quality, but its anonymous character challenged its ability to build relationships, memory, and identity. In the process of reinterpretation, “the aesthetic and/or symbolic dimensions of the brand,” such as its “product features (design, technology, and know-how)” and “features related to the brand history” (e.g., people and places related to the brand’s past, past competitors, and events) must be explored (ibid., 5897). In terms of product features, Hasami products were indeed distinct from typical Arita ware, which is one of the most popular Japanese traditional pottery brands (Uehara 2015, 91). Arita ware is mainly known as luxurious chinaware made by famous artisans whose names and styles have been passed on, such as *Kakiemon* and *Imaemon*, or famous manufacturing companies such as *Koran-sha* and *Fukagawa-seiji*. They cherish traditional motifs and designs and produce luxury and decorative objects. In contrast, Hasami ware is characterised as products with “industrial design,” (Fukazawa 2018, 260) whose value lies in their “appearance, functionality, and manufacturability” (<https://www.idsa.org/what-industrial-design> Accessed on 25, 8, 2020). The aim is to use it for everyday purposes rather than for decoration. To launch a new brand of Hasami ware, the identity of the brand was associated with the term “casual rich” (The University of Nagasaki 2016, 22), meaning it had “casual use and design but was of high quality.” Following the launch of the brand identity, the distribution was also relocated from department stores to trendy retailers, such as stand-alone homeware and interior shops, concept stores, and cafés. Websites and online shops were established. In 2006, Hasami ware started participating in the Tokyo Tableware Festival as a brand to increase its visibility. The idea of “casual rich” is well accepted by today’s Japanese consumers, particularly women, and its success is proven every year by the increasing number of

customers gathered at the Hasami ware section at the Tokyo Tableware Festival (Imada 2016, 108). The town of Hasami was also rebranded in 2004 along with the launch of an incorporated non-profit organisation called “Green Craft Tourism” (The Association for the Promotion of Hasami Ware 2018, 105). Its purpose was to rebrand Hasami town as “the town of art and design” (ibid.,106). In 2006, the previous warehouse of pottery production was renovated to become a landmark of the new town of Hasami with stylish shops and restaurants. Following this, young people and artists migrated to Hasami to open shops, cafés, and galleries. In July 2019, the Ministry of Economy accepted a project titled “Rebranding Hasami and its craft industry for tourism and the global market” funded by the Cool Japan Fund (<https://press.jtbcorp.jp/jp/2019/07/20190719-cooljapan.html> Accessed on 25, 11, 2019, my translation). This project aims to globalise both Hasami ware and the town by proposing value-added products and advertising them to the world.

A website called “Hasami life” (<https://hasamilife.com/> Accessed on 2, 8, 2020) aims not only to sell the products, but also provide the brand with a story involving information on its products, locality, and producers. This follows the principle of “brand authentication” (Dion and Mazzalovo 2016, 5898) that involves verifying the heritage of a brand and relying on “institutional actors such as journalists, collectors, historians, and museums” to promote its re-articulation. The Nakaoyama Community Centre and the museum of Hasami ware, located in the Tourist Information Office, exhibit the history and production process of Hasami ware as a genuine traditional craft. Following an increase in its visibility, along with the various marketing activities mentioned above, the press, newspapers, and television came to the kilns and producers for interviews (The Association for the Promotion of Hasami Ware 2018, 111). Additionally, the University of Nagasaki published two books on Hasami ware, which explain its brand history and revitalisation process.

3 Data analysis

3.1 *Fetishistic effects of English as a Lingua Franca*

Similar to several other countries, English is frequently used in Japan for advertising and marketing. According to Kelly-Holmes (2014, 143), the “contemporary functioning of ‘visual’ English illustrates well the dissolving of cultural, political and semiotic boundaries” due to the function of English as a lingua franca (Jenkins 2009). The English fetish in this context can be articulated as “neutrality,” based on “the ideology that it represents the language of no-one and simultaneously the language of everyone” (Kelly-Holmes 2014, 143), and “globality” to ensure “global credibility” (ibid., 145). The two English brand names of Hasami ware, “Common” and “Hasami Porcelain,” neutralise its local image and globalise its products. The websites of these brands are bilingual, that is, they are in Japanese and English (**Figure 3**). The use of English as a lingua franca erases

Figure 3 The “About” section of the website of “Hasami Porcelain”



any traces of the brand left by the country of origin, Hasami in Japan, and adds a global image to the products and caters to a diverse clientele.

The meaning of the name “Common” emphasises this neutralising effect, indicating that the products are “ordinary” and “common” to every consumer. Neutralisation is also reflected in the photo on the first page of the brochure observing plates, bowls, mug cups, glasses, and cutlery (**Figure 4**). The colours used are basic (white, blue, yellow, red, and green), and there is no sign of typical Japanese eating habits such as chopsticks and rice bowls. At the same time, however, the country of origin is discreetly mentioned by inscribing “Japan” at the bottom of the products along with the logos (**Figure 5**). This does not contradict the neutralising effect of the English as a lingua franca fetish because both effects guarantee global credibility and the high quality of the products as Japanese artisanal crafts. The meaning of “Common” may also index an idea that the quality of the products is “ordinary.” To remove such a negative connotation, the websites display the production process in the photographs to guarantee that the products are carefully created by highly skilled craftsmen (**Figure 6**).

Figure 4 A photo published on the first page of the brochure of “Common”



Figure 5 The name of the country of origin, Japan, inscribed at the bottom of the product



Figure 6 Production process of “Common”

Unlike “Common,” the name “Hasami Porcelain” manifests the region of production and type of pottery. Instead of using Japan as a label, it applies the name of the region, that is Hasami, to advertise this local craft to the world. This country-of-origin effect indexes natural raw materials from the region and the reputed glazing techniques of Hasami ware as a traditional craft. Such a local pottery brand has successfully gained global credibility worldwide because of the impact of English as a lingua franca fetish. The use of “porcelain” differentiates the products from ceramic ones and guarantees a durable, fine-grained, and impervious quality, as is the case with fine kaolin clay. Simply referring to the region and type of product in English successfully maps all the above-mentioned characteristics onto the brand, as if it were the most representative and emblematic Hasami ware introduced to the global market.

The image of a “global” and “cosmopolitan” (Kelly-Holmes 2005, 71) tableware and lifestyle is visualised through the photos presented on the websites and the brochures of these brands. The photos of “Common” display “usage occasions” (Adcock 2000, 210), the situations when the products of a brand are used, with Western food (**Figure 7**), which further emphasises the target branding. This implies that the products of this brand are “common” to the Western style of life and cuisine. The front page of the websites of “Hasami Porcelain” also shows the usage occasions: a design studio, home, and restaurant (**Figure 8**), which are modern, urban, and artistic.

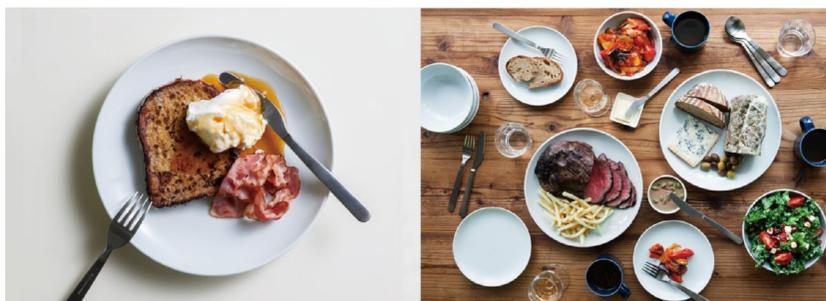
Figure 7 Usage occasions of “Common” products with Western food

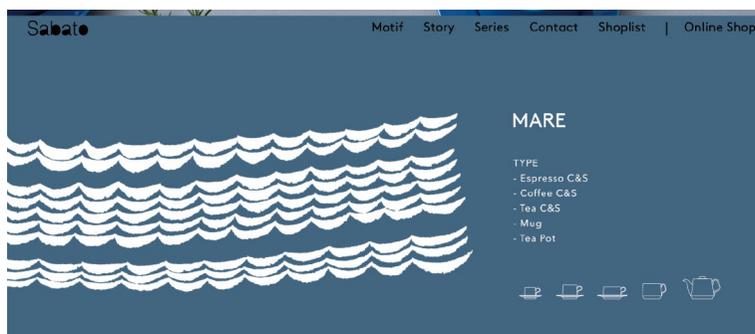
Figure 8 Usage occasions of “Hasami Porcelain”: design studio, home, and restaurant

3.2 Impact of a foreign language fetish

The effect of a foreign language fetish is the opposite of the fetish of English as a lingua franca; it aims to highlight and display “foreignness or otherness” (Kelly-Holmes 2014, 141) although “an image of language may be structured only from the point of view of another language, which is taken as the norm (Bakhtin 1981, 360, cited in Kelly-Holmes 2014, 141). The effect of a foreign language fetish is utilised in the brand names of Saikai: “Sabato” (meaning “Saturday”) and “Nuppu” (meaning “bud”).

The front page of the websites of “Sabato” (**Figure 9**) uses English and Italian for different purposes: English is used for “instrumental functions,” (Kelly-Holmes 2014, 147) that is to specify the types of the products (e.g., cups and plates) and in the navigation menu; Italian is used to highlight the design motifs as foreign and distinctive and to authenticate their design created in an Italian-speaking country, in this context Southern Switzerland where its designer is based. This gateway page does not contain Japanese. It also uses the effect of the English fetish to erase the country of origin and thus globalise the brand.

“Sabato” in Italian means “Saturday,” indicating the weekend. According to the websites, it is associated with its consumers’ “relaxing time like Saturdays” (<http://www.>

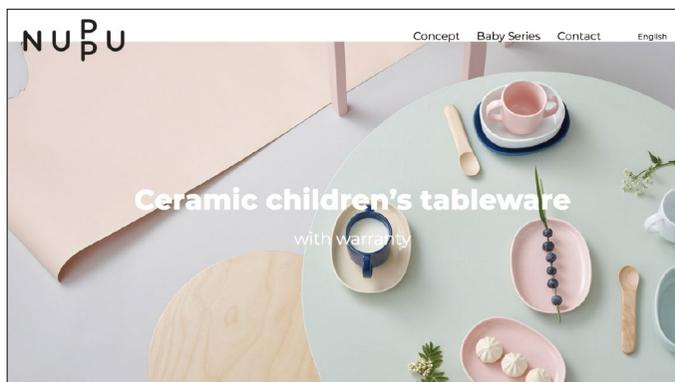
Figure 9 Front page of “Sabato”

sabatotableware.com/story/ Accessed on 28, 8, 2020). Such relaxation time is visually and phonetically interpreted through Italian motif designs. These motifs represent nature (e.g., “*mare*” (sea), “*vento*” (wind), “*fiume*” (river) and “*foresta*” (forest)), and life (e.g., “*colomba*” (dove) and “*coniglio*” (rabbit) as animal life and “*casa*” (house) metonymically human life). They are all demonstrative of the countryside environment and are not associated with urban lifestyles. This shows that country life is synonymous with relaxation, which is diagrammatised in the motif designs. The pronunciation of “Sabato” also draws an image of relaxation. The vowels [a] and [o] “tend to suggest largeness and slowness” (Hiraga 2005,133), such as a big yawn and the slow nature of life on a weekend.

“Nuppu” means “bud” in Finnish. It metaphorically signifies that the users of this product are children. The products are named after flowers in English and the Japanese *katakana* syllabary (only in the brochure): “Twin Flower (ツインフラワー),” “Wood Violet (ウッドバイオレット),” “Common Heather (コモンヘザー),” “Blue Bell (ブルーベル),” and “Wind Flower (ウインドフラワー).” The application of English and Japanese aims to tackle the instrumental concern of Japanese consumers finding it difficult to read and understand the meaning of the names of the products. These metaphorical expressions imply that the children (buds) will steadily grow (to become beautiful flowers) by using the products of this brand. The names of the flowers and the colours of the products refer to the natural raw materials used to create safe ceramic tableware for children. They may also represent ideas of sustainability and ecological concern, which are well developed and disseminated in Nordic countries such as Finland.

The gateway page of “Nuppu” starts with a photo slideshow and the catchphrase “Ceramic children’s tableware with warranty” (<http://www.nupputableware.com/> Accessed on 28, 8, 2020) (**Figure 10**). The catchphrase and the navigation menu are in English, whereas the logo is in Finnish. According to Kelly-Holmes (2014, 146), “the language is indexing the brand’s credibility in terms of a culture that is different to that of the notional addressee of the advertising or marketing message.” Hence, the Finnish

Figure 10 Photo slideshow with the catchphrase of “Nuppu”



brand name of children's tableware consider the cultural characteristics of Finland, particularly its outstanding support system for child-rearing, to guarantee the quality of the products as functional, safe, and educational.

A common effect of the foreign language fetish in "Sabato" and "Nuppu" is that they conjure up their designers in Europe. "Sabato" is the name of a cat owned by the Japanese designer Aoi Huber, who lives in the Italian-speaking part of southern Switzerland (<https://saikaishop.com/designers/aoi-huber-kono/> Accessed on 25, 11, 2021). "Sabato" represents the designer's own weekend and time to relax, which are diagrammatised by the motif designs and the names of the product series in Italian. The Finnish name "Nuppu" is associated with the Finnish designer, Maija Puoskari. According to the websites, this brand was "inspired by Maija's own child-rearing experiences as the mother of small children" (<http://www.nupputableware.com/en/nuppu-ceramic-childrens-tableware/> Accessed on 22, 11, 2019). This guarantees that the designer carefully considers the safety and usability of the products for children just like a mother would design products for her children's healthy growth.

3.3 Iconic operations in brand logos

The logotype of "Common" is in italic cursive with thick strokes (**Figure 11**). Cursive writing may indicate faster writing in a fair form by hand. This suggests that the design is fair in form, but for daily use. It can also signify that they are "handmade."

Comparing the products with the logo reveals that there are several iconic resemblances: roundness and thickness. The round shapes of the letters "c" and "o" are iconic to the round forms of plates, bowls, and cups (see **Figure 4**). The repetition of the vowel [o] may emphasise the roundness of this brand. Letterforms are thick and strong and mapped onto product designs. The repetitions of the letters "o" and "m" resemble the layered plates and bowls in the photos (**Figure 12**). The name is short and simple, consisting of three letters "c," "o," "m," and "n." Simplicity and commonality were diagrammatised in the products. For instance, the plates come only in two shapes (round and oval) and five basic colours.

Figure 11 Logo of "Common"



Figure 12 Plates and bowls of "Common"



Figure 13 Logo of “Hasami Porcelain”

HASAMI PORCELAIN™

Figure 14 Vertically stackable products

The letterform in the logo for “Hasami Porcelain” is vertically long, straight, and thick (**Figure 13**). The spaces between letters are sufficiently narrow to emphasise the vertical length. All letters are in the upper case, which reinforces portrait design. The upper part of the letters “P” and “R” are situated higher compared to the horizontal line of “H” and “A.” This positioning emphasises the tallness. Unlike “Common,” the width of the letterforms is uniform, indicating regularity in design. Such a vertically long design indexes the design and characteristics of the products. One of the characteristics of this product is the nesting design of vertical stackability inspired by traditional Japanese tiered food boxes called *jūbako* (**Figure 14**). This allows the products to have tall and straight characteristics like the logo. The colours used in the products are black, brown, beige, and white, all of which are simple, basic, and organic, diagrammatising the modern and organic quality of materials.

The simplicity, regularity, and functionality of the logo and the products diagrammatise the reinterpretation of the revitalised Hasami ware designed by a Japanese designer from the US, Takuhiro Shinomoto. The country-of-origin effect in the brand name guarantees that the products are of superior quality and that the materials used are organic, whereas the sophisticated design in the US indexes the contemporary lifestyle, which is well represented in the photos on the brochure and the websites.

The logo of “Sabato” diagrammatises the design motifs (**Figure 15**). All motifs are sequential and rhythmic, resembling the sequential pattern in the logotype (**Figure 16**). The letterform is round and uses a lower case except for “S.” The round forms in “a,” “b,” and “o” are filled in black, indexing a design with “figures and lines creating a rhythm and animals striking a pose” (<http://www.sabatotableware.com/story/> Accessed on 29, 8, 2020). It also looks like the rhythmical march of small animals by alternately

Figure 15 Logo of “Sabato”



Figure 16 Coffee cups of “casa (house)” and “mare (sea)”



presenting small and large circles in the logo. The logo was also indexed to the products. The handles of cups are similar to the letter “a” in an upside-down position (Figure 16). The round shape of the logo also diagrammatises the pronunciation of the vowels [a] and [o].

The logo design of “Nuppu” signifies several characteristics of the products (Figure 17). First, there are no sharp corners in the letters, even in “N” and “P”, diagrammatising the forms of the products without pointed parts for the safety of children. The arrangement of letters is interesting; two “P”s are vertically placed between two “U”s. This visually augmented the two repetitions. The placement of two vertical “P”s look like two handles of a mug or layered products whereas the repetition of “U” looks like a bowl and a plate. This special logotype can be visualised in a photo, as shown in Figure 18.

Interestingly, both “Sabato” and “Nuppu” sound Japanese, following “the most common type of Japanese mora” consisting of “a consonant followed by a vowel (a [CV] mora)” (Hiraga 2005, 129). Such a “Japanese-like” effect may cause global consumers to think that they are Japanese brands. Similar to the country-of-origin effect mentioned in the analysis of “Common” and “Hasami Porcelain,” this phonetic resemblance to the Japanese language diagrammatises the idea that the label stating that the product is “made in Japan” is retained as a strong landmark for the global tableware industry while also helping Japanese consumers to easily pronounce and remember the brand names.

Figure 17 Logo of “Nuppu”



Figure 18 Sequential layout of cups, plates and bowls



4 Conclusion: the awakened “sleeping beauty” and newly revitalised Hasami ware

In the new brand names of Hasami ware, two fetishes were found in the analysis: the English fetish as a lingua franca and the foreign language fetish. The effect of English as a lingua franca fetish erased the traces of the local and historical background of the brands and added a global image to the products to help them adapt to the diverse lifestyles of the clientele. While neutralising the former old-fashioned image of Hasami ware, the country-of-origin effect was also applied, suggesting that the products were made in Hasami, Japan. Both the effects worked together to create the idea that a local Japanese pottery brand has become a global brand by modernising its design and preserving high quality employing traditional techniques so that the products contribute to the consumers’ cosmopolitan lifestyle. Modernised designs, along with the heritage of the brand, traditional techniques, and natural raw materials maintain the brands’ “unique” characteristics. Bilingual websites also made use of this effect of English as a lingua franca fetish to add global credibility to all the four brands of Hasami ware. By developing new outlets and markets on the Internet, the newly revitalised Hasami ware was successfully introduced to the world.

The second effect of the linguistic fetish was in the usage of foreign languages. It is possible to differentiate brands from other similar brands and products by displaying the foreign and distinctive characteristics of the products while fetishising a foreign language in advertising and marketing. The authentic foreignness of the product designs of “Sabato” and “Nuppu” was well highlighted in the use of the Italian and Finnish languages. Furthermore, the foreign language fetish conjured up their designers. The name “Sabato,” which was also the name of its designer’s cat, indexes the designer’s private lifestyle diagrammatised by the names of the design motifs in Italian, representing the nature and animals around her house. Contrarily, the Finnish name indexes the Finnish designer herself, including her own experiences of child-rearing, which guarantees children’s safety and usability of the products. This ensured that the application of foreign names in the context of new brands succeeded in creating the distinguished characteristic of Hasami ware: designed in the West, made in Japan. As mentioned earlier, revitalising traditional Japanese crafts is difficult due to outdated designs and a lack of outsourced product designs. Saikai successfully solved these problems by collaborating with designers from Europe and the US. Brand names in foreign languages visually represent this strategy.

Brand logos are “key assets in companies’ communication efforts” and are “important tools to differentiate brands from their competition” because “logos are often the first exposure to a brand or company when they appear on a product, in an advertisement or in another way” (Bettels and Wiedmann 2019, 1). Therefore, brand logos must be carefully designed in order to “visually represent the brands and what they stand for” (Japutra et al. 2018, 192) to increase “brand awareness” and “buying intention” (Bossel et al. 2019,

129). All the four new brand logos beautifully diagrammatised the brand products and design motifs. Thus, by looking at brand logos, consumers are able to imagine what types of products they provide. The iconic resemblance between the implications of the brand names and their logos was also observed in the analysis. Modern, urban, and artistic logotypes corresponding to product designs established brand credibility, which became an important element in promoting Hasami ware as a global tableware brand.

Creating a successful brand in the Japanese craft industry is urgently required to protect traditional Japanese craftsmanship. Hasami ware has been successful in this regard. Although the brand was previously less known and associated with “sleeping beauty” in terms of its visual representation (Dion and Mazzalovo 2016, 5894), Hasami ware has been revitalised by modernising designs to attract the existing as well as new consumers. Brand names in foreign languages and their logos allow the recently “awakened” and revitalised brand of Hasami ware to rejuvenate its products. Foreign names and the specification of the country of origin seem to be contradictory, but they are strategically integrated to successfully create a new value: “designed in the West, made in Japan.” Such a collaborative strategy can be a new way of saving traditional Japanese crafts.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my special gratitude to Morisuke Kodama, the President of the Association for the Promotion of Hasami Ware and Chairman of Saikai Co., Ltd.; Masako Suenaga, the Head of Public Relations at Saikai Co., Ltd.; and Yuji Nakano of the Board of Education in Hasami for allowing me to interview them and for providing all the requisite information about their brands and products. I would also like to thank Professor Emeritus Joan Turner, Goldsmiths, University of London, whose insights and expertise have helped me to develop the ideas of this paper, and David-Anthony Gordon for his helpful comments on an earlier version of the manuscript.

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